
Local teacher embarking on research cruise

By ARCHIE MOUNTAIN | Mar 31, 2014



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NEWPORT — Kim Gogan, a science teacher at Newport High School, is a bit nervous and excited these days, but with good reason.

She'll be heading out to sea April 7 on a 25-day research cruise in the Atlantic Ocean.

Photo by: ARCHIE MOUNTAIN

Kim Gogan, a science teacher at Newport High School, will be participating in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Teacher at Sea program starting Monday, April 7. Now in her ninth year teaching at Newport, Gogan addresses students during the Friday morning Advisory period at the school. Sophomore students seated are Chris Mitchler, left, and Trevor Boardman.

Gogan figures she'll be right at home on the ocean, after all, she grew up on Chebeague Island off Casco, Maine, and has a degree in environmental sciences from Unity College in Unity, Maine.

"I've been out on lobster boats. I love boats and love the ocean," she stated. "I wouldn't be the teacher or person I am without that background."

Gogan, head of the science department at Newport High School and a resident of Claremont, has been selected to participate in the research cruise as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Teacher at Sea program.

This program bridges science through real-world research experiences.

Her biology students, primarily sophomores at Newport High School, are also excited about Gogan's new home for the next month aboard NOAA Ship Gordon Gunter, as one of 26 teachers selected from a nationwide pool of nearly 200 applicants.

"Through my experience with NOAA, my students will be able to learn first-hand about exciting research at sea," Gogan said. "Since I'm sailing during the school year, they will be witness to and participants in the research as it happens.

"Making their learning experience relevant through my own experiences is vital to getting them excited about science," Gogan continued.

Gogan said she hopes to meet people that work on the ship to find out the types of jobs that are available in their professions, information that she can pass on to her students.

During her 25-day cruise along the George's Bank from the Gulf of Maine to Virginia, Gogan will be writing a blog about her experience two to four times each week, allowing her students and others to keep up with her work while aboard the ship.

Her blogs will be accessible at <http://teacheratsea.noaa.gov/2014/gogan.html>

Gogan will board the Gordon Gunter on April 7 at Newport, R.I., and will assist scientists daily as they conduct a study of protected resources and turtle abundance.

"Scientists are working to develop models and associated tools to provide seasonal, spatially-explicit density estimates incorporating habitat characteristics of marine mammals, turtles and seabirds in the western North Atlantic Ocean," according to

Jennifer Hammond, the program director.

“NOAA’s Teacher at Sea Program gives teachers the professional opportunity of a lifetime with a chance to participate in cutting edge science, on the ocean, working side-by-side with world-renowned scientists,” Hammond continued. “Teachers describe this authentic research experience as transformative and one that allows them to bring new knowledge and excitement back to their classrooms.”

As a NOAA Teacher at Sea, participants must be willing to fulfill several program requirements prior to, during and after their cruise. The list includes:

- Complete an online training course.
- Submit three to four logs per week while at sea or upon return.
- Submit one lesson plan that addresses the science and research that was being conducted on the mission.
- Submit one lesson plan, activity, or similar document that addresses ocean careers.
- Submit an article for publication or conduct a presentation about your mission at an educators’ conference or for colleagues.
- Submit a post-cruise survey.

Once the sea adventure concludes at the end of April, there will also be an additional piece of work that should be a fun task for Gogan and her students.

At some point during her Teacher at Sea cruise, Gogan will get to decorate a buoy with Newport-related material attached and drop it in the ocean.

“We will be able to follow that Newport buoy’s travels for the next 400 days,” she said.

In addition to her biology students, Gogan will also have three family members following her blogs — husband Chris, a 1990 graduate of Stevens High School, and two children, Lilly, 10, and CJ, 6, both students at Disnard Elementary School.

During her absence from the Newport High School classroom, Tom Liveston of Claremont, a retired teacher, will be filling in for her. His salary will be covered by the NOAA program.

Gogan will also receive \$5 a day while aboard the Gordon Gunter.

Currently in her ninth year teaching in Newport, Gogan received a packing list of what clothing and other items to take on the cruise.

The Teacher at Sea program is now in its 24th year. It has provided teachers the opportunity to gain first-hand experience participating in science at sea. Educators chosen are able to enrich their curricula with the depth of understanding they gain by living and working side-by-side with scientists studying the marine environment, according to Hammond.

During the first 23 years, more than 650 teachers from every state in the United States have been on NOAA research cruises. They have reached 325,000 students during that period.

In addition to Gogan, two other New England teachers will be participating in the Teacher at Sea program this year, one from Massachusetts and one from Connecticut. Gogan is the sixth New Hampshire teacher selected for the program in 24 years.

According to Hammond, NOAA’s mission is to understand and predict changes in the earth’s environment from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage its coastal and marine resources.